

“To This End Was I Born”

Lesson 26

Matthew 26:47–27:66; Mark 14:43–15:39; Luke 22:47–23:56; John 18–19

Purpose To help class members feel the Savior’s love for them and increase their love for him and their gratitude for his atoning sacrifice.

- Preparation**
1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. Matthew 26:47–75; Mark 14:43–72; Luke 22:47–71; John 18:1–27. Shortly after his agony in Gethsemane, Jesus is betrayed by Judas, who appears with chief priests, Pharisees, and soldiers. Jesus submits himself to his captors, who take him from the garden and subject him to a Jewish trial. He is questioned first by Annas, a former high priest, and then by Caiaphas, Annas’s successor and son-in-law. The chief priests and elders who are present spit on Jesus, mock him, bind him, and accuse him of blasphemy, an offense punishable by death. Outside Caiaphas’s palace, Peter denies that he knows Jesus.
 - b. Matthew 27:1–26; Mark 15:1–15; Luke 23:1–25; John 18:28–19:16. Because the chief priests and elders do not have power to sentence Jesus to death, they send him to be tried by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea (Bible Dictionary, “Pilate,” 751). Before Pilate, Jesus is accused of being an enemy to Caesar. Learning that Jesus is from Galilee, Pilate sends him to Herod, a governor over Galilee. Herod refuses to judge Jesus and sends him back to Pilate, who yields to the crowd’s demands that Jesus be crucified.
 - c. Matthew 27:27–66; Mark 15:16–39; Luke 23:26–56; John 19:17–42. Jesus is scourged and crucified. On the cross he experiences great agony while offering himself as a sacrifice for mankind.
 2. Additional reading: Isaiah 53; Mark 15:39–47; John 3:16; 15:13; 1 Nephi 11:32–33; 19:7–9; 2 Nephi 9:21–22; Bible Dictionary, “Crucifixion,” 651.
 3. Prepare the seven wordstrips described on page 110 (or prepare to write the statements on the chalkboard).
 4. If the following materials are available, use them during the lesson:
 - a. The pictures The Betrayal of Jesus (62468; Gospel Art Picture Kit 228); Peter’s Denial (62177; Gospel Art Picture Kit 229); and The Crucifixion (62505; Gospel Art Picture Kit 230).
 - b. “To This End Was I Born,” a sixteen-minute segment of *New Testament Video Presentations* (53914).
 5. Suggestion for teaching: When teachers and class members are reverent, they invite the Spirit to be present. Class members should be “free to discuss, free to speak, free to participate in classwork, but no member of the class has the right to distract another student by jostling or making light and frivolous remarks” (David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* [1954], 224). Set an example of reverence toward God and respect for each class member.

Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

Have class members turn to the map “Jerusalem in Jesus’ Time” (map 17 in the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible).

Explain that this lesson focuses on the Savior’s Crucifixion and the events in the hours that preceded it. These events occurred at places found on the map. Help class members locate the following sites: (1) the Garden of Gethsemane, (2) the house of Caiaphas, (3) the court of the Gentiles, (4) Fortress Antonia (the house of Pilate), and (5) the Hill of Golgotha (Calvary).

When class members have located the Hill of Golgotha, explain that Jesus was crucified there. Display the picture of the Crucifixion. Ask class members to imagine a small child looking at the picture and asking, “Why did Jesus need to die?” Invite class members to take time during the lesson to ponder what they would say to the child. Tell them that you will discuss the question toward the end of this lesson.

Scripture Discussion and Application As you teach the following scripture passages, help class members understand the love the Savior showed for them when he allowed himself to be persecuted and crucified.

1. Jesus is betrayed, arrested, and accused of blasphemy; Peter denies Jesus three times.

Discuss Matthew 26:47–75; Mark 14:43–72; Luke 22:47–71; and John 18:1–27. Invite class members to read selected verses aloud. You may want to summarize this account as outlined in item 1a of the “Preparation” section. Display the picture of Jesus being betrayed in Gethsemane.

- How did Peter respond to the men who came to the Garden of Gethsemane to take Jesus away? (See John 18:10.) How did Jesus respond to these men? (See Luke 22:51–53; John 18:11–12.) Why did Jesus allow himself to be taken? (See Matthew 26:53–54; John 10:17–18. Explain that it was Heavenly Father’s will that Jesus lay down his life for us.)
- The chief priests and elders of the Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy, a crime punishable by death (Mark 14:64). What is blasphemy? (Being irreverent toward God or claiming to be equal to God.) What did Jesus say that the chief priests and elders thought was blasphemous? (See Mark 14:60–63.)
- As Jesus was led from the garden, most of his disciples “forsook him, and fled” (Matthew 26:56). However, Peter and John continued to follow him (Matthew 26:58; John 18:15; it is assumed that the unnamed disciple in John 18:15 is John). What did Peter do when people outside Caiaphas’s palace said that he knew Jesus? (See Matthew 26:69–74.) What did Peter do when he recognized that he had denied Jesus three times? (See Matthew 26:75; see also verses 33–35.)

Display the picture of Peter denying Jesus.

- How do some of us, like Peter, sometimes deny our faith? What can we learn from Peter’s life after he denied the Lord?

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“My heart goes out to Peter. So many of us are so much like him. We pledge our loyalty; we affirm our determination to be of good courage; we declare, sometimes even publicly, that come what may we will do the right thing, that we will stand for the right cause, that we will be true to ourselves and to others.

“Then the pressures begin to build. Sometimes these are social pressures. Sometimes they are personal appetites. Sometimes they are false ambitions. There is a weakening of the will. There is a softening of discipline. There is capitulation. And then there is remorse, followed by self-accusation and bitter tears of regret. . . .

“ . . . If there be those throughout the Church who by word or act have denied the faith, I pray that you may draw comfort and resolution from the example of Peter, who, though he had walked daily with Jesus, in an hour of extremity momentarily denied the Lord and also the testimony which he carried in his own heart. But he rose above this and became a mighty defender and a powerful advocate. So, too, there is a way for any person to turn about and add his or her strength and faith to the strength and faith of others in building the kingdom of God” (“And Peter Went Out and Wept Bitterly,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1995, 2–4, 6).

2. Jesus is sentenced to be crucified.

Read and discuss selected verses from Matthew 27:1–26; Mark 15:1–15; Luke 23:1–25; and John 18:28–19:16. You may want to summarize this account as outlined in item 1*b* of the “Preparation” section.

- When Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent him to Herod, who was a governor over Galilee (Luke 23:6–7). Why was Herod “exceeding glad” to see Jesus? (See Luke 23:8.) How did the Savior respond to Herod’s questions? (See Luke 23:9; compare this verse with the prophecy in Isaiah 53:7.)
- After Herod and his men accused and mocked Jesus, they sent him back to Pilate (Luke 23:11). What was Pilate’s judgment of Jesus? (See Luke 23:13–17; see also Luke 23:4.) Why did Pilate sentence Jesus to be crucified? (See Matthew 27:15–24; Mark 15:6–15; Luke 23:18–25; John 19:1–16.) How might we, like Pilate, sometimes try to avoid responsibility for difficult decisions?
- To one of Pilate’s questions about whether Jesus was a king, Jesus replied, “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (John 18:37). In what ways is Jesus a King? (See Psalm 24:10; Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 11:15; 15:3; 2 Nephi 10:14.) What does it mean that his “kingdom is not of this world”? (John 18:36).

3. Jesus is scourged and crucified.

Read and discuss selected verses from Matthew 27:27–66; Mark 15:16–39; Luke 23:26–56; and John 19:17–42. Display the picture of the Crucifixion.

- What did the people do to Jesus after he was sentenced to be crucified? (See Matthew 27:27–44; Luke 23:34–39.) Why did Jesus allow the people to persecute him? (See 1 Nephi 19:9.)

The scriptures record seven statements that Jesus made while on the cross. Read and discuss the verses listed below. As you discuss them, display wordstrips of the statements or write the statements on the chalkboard.

1. *Luke 23:34. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."*

- From the Joseph Smith Translation we learn that when Jesus said this, he was praying for the Roman soldiers who had crucified him (Luke 23:34, footnote 34c). What does this reveal about him? What is the worldly way to respond to people who hurt or offend us? How are we blessed when we follow Jesus' example?

2. *Luke 23:43. To the repentant thief: "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."*

3. *John 19:26–27. To his mother, Mary: "Woman, behold thy son!" To John: "Behold thy mother!"*

- Whose needs did Jesus think of during his painful ordeal? (See Luke 23:43; John 19:26–27.) What can we learn from this? (If questions arise about Jesus' statement in Luke 23:43, see the third additional teaching idea.)

4. *Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*

- What did Jesus experience on the cross that enabled him to understand and help us when we feel alone? Why is it important to know that the Savior can bear not only our sins but also our loneliness, grief, and fear?

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said: "Because he must ultimately tread this winepress of redemption unaided, can he endure the darkest moment of them all, the shock of the greatest pain? This comes not with thorns and with nails, but with the terror of feeling utterly alone: . . . 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34). Can he bear all of our sins *and* our fear and loneliness too? He did and he does and he will" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 32; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 26).

5. *John 19:28. "I thirst."*

- Despite all that Jesus suffered, this was his only mention of physical discomfort. What was he given when he said that he was thirsty? (See John 19:29.)

6. *John 19:30. "It is finished."*

- According to the Joseph Smith Translation, Jesus said, "Father, it is finished, thy will is done" (Matthew 27:50, footnote 50a). Why did the Savior have to die in order to accomplish Heavenly Father's will? (See 2 Nephi 9:5; 3 Nephi 27:13–16. If you used the attention activity, invite class members to share their ideas on how to answer the child's question.)

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "He needed to die, that he might open the graves of all men as his own tomb was opened. Without the deep darkness of the crucifixion hour, there could have been no spring of coming from the grave" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 4; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 4).

7. *Luke 23:46. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."*

If you are using the video presentation "To This End Was I Born," show it now.

Conclusion

Explain that the Savior's first recorded premortal words were "Here am I, send me" (Abraham 3:27). Among his first recorded mortal words were "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49). Among the last words he spoke in mortality were "Father, it is finished, thy will is done" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 27:54; see Matthew 27:50, footnote 50*a*). Jesus never lost sight of his Father's will or his own mission. He could have called upon legions of angels to rescue him, but he did not (Matthew 26:53–54). Despite the agony, he never faltered in his humility and his willingness to accomplish the infinite Atonement.

Testify of the truths discussed in the lesson. As appropriate, invite class members to share their testimonies.

Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

1. Following the Savior's example during times of difficulty

The Savior's actions during the last day of his mortal life show the great magnitude of his character. Review some of the trials Jesus endured on that day. Then ask the following questions:

- What qualities of character were evident in Jesus during this difficult time? (Answers may include that he was more concerned for others than for himself, that he was forgiving, that he was submissive to Heavenly Father's will, that he did not condemn others for their weaknesses, and that he did not complain. List class members' responses on the chalkboard. Ask class members to give specific instances when the qualities were evident.)
- What qualities are often evident in us during our most difficult times? How can we follow the Savior's example during times of difficulty?

2. "I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matthew 27:4)

- What did Judas do in an attempt to repent for betraying the Savior? (See Matthew 27:3–5.) What can we learn from his experience about the "payment" the world gives us in exchange for our sins?

3. "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43)

Refer to the following information if you need to explain the Savior's words in Luke 23:43.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that Jesus told the thief, "This day thou shalt be with me in the world of spirits" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 309).

From Doctrine and Covenants 138:36–37 we learn that Jesus went to the world of spirits during the time between his death and Resurrection and that there he prepared the faithful spirits to preach his gospel to the spirits who had not received it on the earth.